**INCREDIBLE SHRINKING NOTES**

This is a summarization strategy called "the incredible shrinking notes" where students start out writing a summary of a reading selection on the large index card.  Students are then given the medium sized card and have to take the information from the large card and condense it onto the medium sized card.  Finally, students are given the small card and must then take the information from the medium sized card and condense it down even further onto the small card.  This is a great way for students to get to the main point/idea of a selection.

The purpose of this activity is to telescope or narrow down notes to their “essence.” The students will focus on what the most important ideas or concepts are.

**Step One**:

Students will listen to a text or passage which is read out loud (at least twice) OR a lecture. They will write down the facts as they hear them on a regular notebook piece of paper. It is important that they write in the same handwriting throughout (the same size!)

**Step Two**:

Students will re-read their notes and choose those which will fit on a 5 ½ x 8 ½ inch sticky note or sheet of paper. (Notebook paper folded in half.)

**Step Three**:

Students will now condense the notes from the 5 ½ x 8 ½ inch piece of paper *to* a 3 x 5 inch sticky note or index card.

**Step Four** (optional):

Students can finish by writing a one sentence summary of the most important concept on an even smaller sticky note which then becomes the student’s “exit slip.”

**Assessment**:

Have the students “share” each step with a partner. They may even write down what others have said on the new sticky note or on the previous one. Students may even read their notes out loud to the rest of the class.

**\*** The objective here is not to take notes like this, but rather to focus on what concepts or ideas are most important as a student does take notes in a lecture or from a reading assigned.

In the end, students should have notes that express the most important facts or themes found in the reading selection.

Emphasize to students that this lesson in note taking is intended to help them see that note taking is about scaling down information to the most important details. Students can also employ this strategy as they study for unit tests. They can read through their notes; "boil down" those notes to key facts, ideas, and themes; and write those key ideas in the margins of their notebooks. The key ideas are the ideas that represent the themes worth reviewing for the upcoming unit test. To study for that test, students might simply review their margin notes and practice supplying supporting information for each key idea.